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ABSTRACT

The Intercampus Interactive Telecommunications System (IITS) is a network for linking classes among three branches of the University of Alabama. This user's guide provides information for the teacher who is conducting classes through the communications link, together with guidelines and suggestions for planning use of the equipment, creating graphics, using the microphone, and appearing on camera (what to wear, how to proceed, and teaching tips). It is noted that a room coordinator is available to assist the teacher throughout the entire preparation and presentation of the lesson. (ALF)

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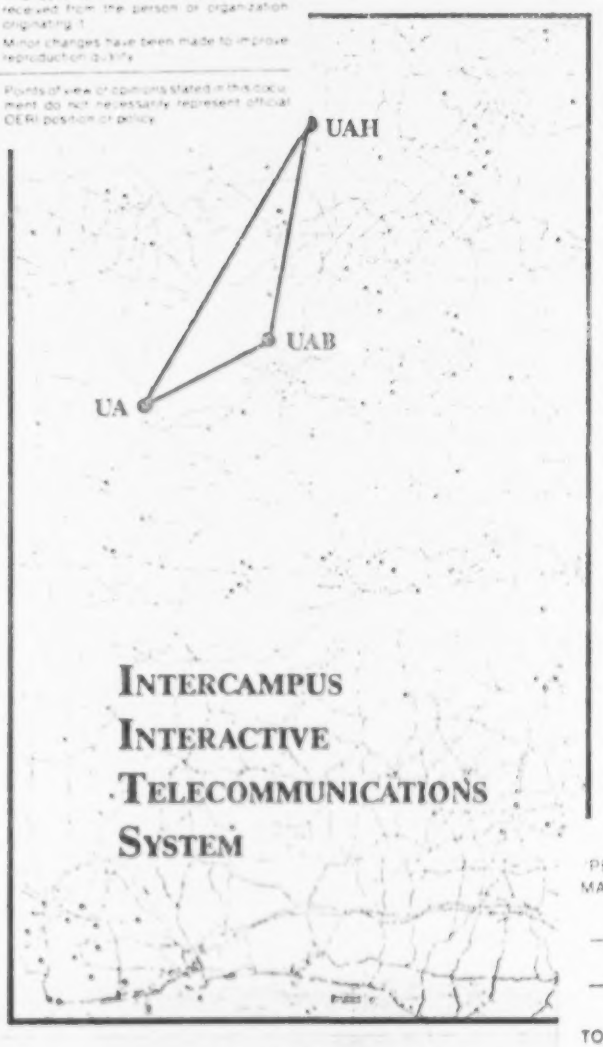

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IITS USER'S GUIDE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SYSTEM

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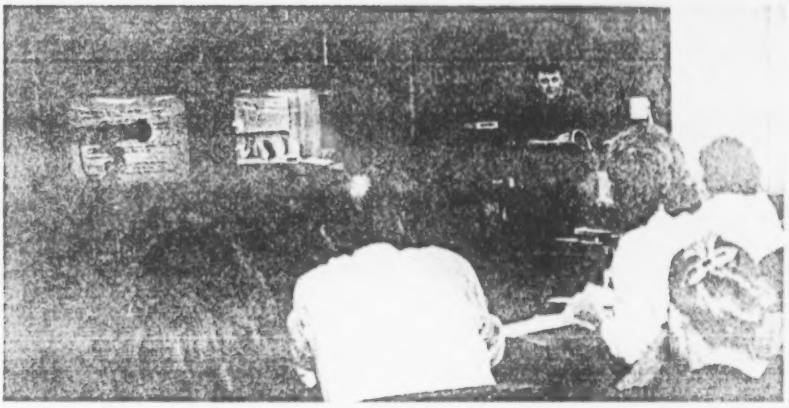

INTERCAMPUS INTERACTIVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

A USER'S GUIDE

Whether you are teaching a class or conducting a meeting, the Intercampus Interactive Telecommunications System offers flexible options to meet your individual needs.

The technology is simple to operate. You can choose to control all or part of the equipment or leave it completely in the hands of the Room Coordinator, who will help with the technical portion of your presentation. Whichever method you choose, you will find ideas for preparation and presentation in this User's Guide.

PLANNING

The first time you use IITS you might want the Room Coordinator to operate all the equipment. By considering a few basic questions and discussing them with the Room Coordinator before your presentation, you will be able to utilize efficiently the communications link that IITS provides.

Will you make the presentation alone or will more than one person be seen on camera at a time?

What kind of visuals will you use (videotape, slides, overheads, transparencies)?

Do your visuals require annotation and will they be sent back and forth electronically among the various sites? (Tips on preparation and modification of graphics for IITS are outlined in another section of this handbook.)

What format or sequence will you follow? Will you lecture and provide graphic illustrations, then follow with a question-and-answer period? If so, should microphones be left open for questions during the lecture or muted until afterward?

Plan to give the Room Coordinator an overview of your program before the session to insure that the room is set up properly and appropriate site connections are made for your presentation.

IITS Equipment

Whether you ask the Room Coordinator for technical assistance or choose to operate the controls yourself, a general knowledge of IITS hardware is essential. You will be working directly with the visual aid technology and microphones, both of which are used in specific ways.

Graphics

IITS offers two excellent options to replace the traditional classroom chalkboard:

✓**ELMO**, a lighted element approximately 8 1/2" x 12" that displays graphics, transparencies, and slides as well as small objects that sit directly on the display area. Similar to an overhead projector, the ELMO is located within easy reach of the presenter.

An object displayed on the ELMO will appear larger than life on the monitor, so consider placing a scaling device such as a penny or a pencil next to the object to provide perspective for the viewer.

✓**PENPAL**, an electronic tablet that enables you to annotate stored graphics. The PENPAL makes any camera shot you choose into a digitally-reproduced slide. You can alter the slide using drawing and text software and send it to another site. Additional changes can be made there and returned to you. Graphics can be saved with or without your changes.

It is not necessary to deliver transparencies, graphics, videotapes, or slides to the IITS room before your presentation. However, if you use the PENPAL option, you will need to schedule time in advance to make these images and store them on the hard disk drive. Schedule a meeting with a Room Coordinator on your campus to facilitate production of these visuals.

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If you plan to use videotape—especially tape you have prepared yourself—make sure it is high-quality and recorded at the fastest possible speed (SP mode). Inexpensive videotape gives a poor signal and leaves deposits on the tape heads. Faulty videotape casings can destroy expensive equipment.

Microphones

A wireless mike for the speaker and table mikes for participants have been installed at each IITS site. Both are sound-activated and extremely sensitive.

The Room Coordinator will set the microphone levels before your session begins. When someone at a remote site speaks or makes a distinct sound, that location becomes instantly visible on the system monitor. You may want the Room Coordinators at remote sites to mute the mikes during a lecture or guest presentation so that inadvertent noise does not switch the picture seen on the monitor. The mute should be cancelled to allow for questions or discussion.

Table mikes are sensitive, and it is not necessary for audience members to speak loudly to be heard over the system; however, participants should be urged to sit near mikes and to speak in their general direction.

Presentation Guidelines

Graphics designed with the IITS technology in mind will enhance the effectiveness of your presentation. Consider the following elements when constructing graphics:

- **Aspect ratio (3x4)**: Images should be proportioned to fit on a television screen. Use a ratio of three units high to four units wide for the background area. An 8 1/2" by 11" piece of paper turned on its side will generally work fine.

- **Font or type face:** Since clarity and visibility are the two most important qualities for television text, use a clean, bold type face or font. Avoid delicate or elaborate styles as they are almost impossible to read on a screen. Prepare drawings, charts, or models simply using clear, strong lines. Break down elaborate diagrams into smaller units and enlarge them if you need to show details.

- **Positioning on the page:** Too much information on any one graphic is difficult to read and takes attention away from the speaker. Use key words and space them generously with wide margins (about two inches all around on 8 1/2" x 11" paper) so that nothing is cut off accidentally.

- **Color:** Color enhances graphics; however, certain colors, such as true red and royal blue, tend to blur on the monitor when used next to each other. Avoid using red for text in particular. White paper stock can be glaring; choose a pastel stock with vivid dark inks. White letters on dark backgrounds show up very well if you create text electronically.

Consider sending or faxing graphics to the remote sites prior to your session for distribution to audience members.

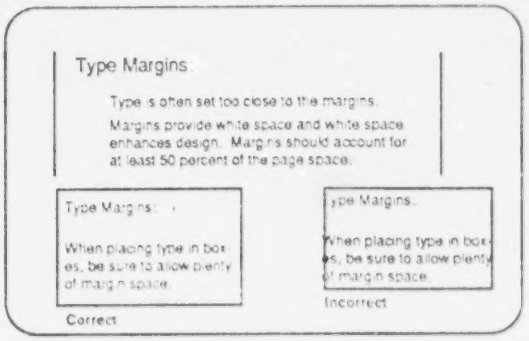
Understanding Camera Angles

The format of your program affects the positioning and movement of cameras. Each IITS room is equipped with three cameras:

Camera 1 is mounted above the IITS monitor unit. It is controlled remotely by the presenter or Room Coordinator and is generally used for wide angle room shots and individual audience members who are speaking.

Creating Effective Graphics For IITS Course Instruction

Just as in the classroom, you will rely on graphics to emphasize key points when you teach on the Intercampus Interactive Telecommunications System. The boxes below, which are similar in shape to the IITS screen, offer some advice on type size, style and format.


Type Margins:
Type is often set too close to the margins.
Margins provide white space and white space enhances design. Margins should account for at least 50 percent of the page space.
Type Margins:
When placing type in boxes, be sure to allow plenty of margin space.
Correct
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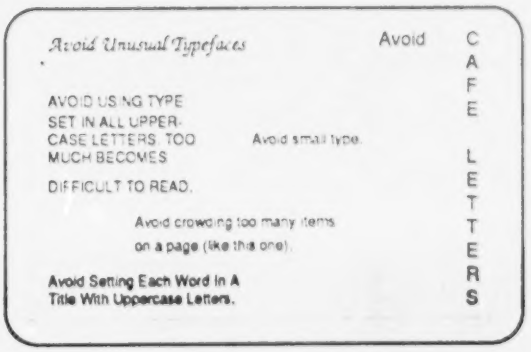

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Camera 2 is a free-standing stationary camera, which must be aimed manually, usually at the speaker.

Camera 3 is permanently mounted above the graphics presentation unit called the ELMO.

Rehearse or review the order of all technical moves with the Room Coordinator prior to your session so that the most effective sequence can be achieved. If you need various technical changes, give a written agenda to the Room Coordinator then discuss the specifics of your presentation together. Attention to detail is vital.

Appearing on Camera

By considering a few basic rules about wardrobe and camera techniques, you will give your presentation maximum impact.

What to Wear

Dress conservatively. Medium blues and grays are good. Tans, dark beiges, and certain yellows or greens can be too close to your skin color and may give you a sallow appearance.

Avoid patterns. Solids are better than stripes or bold prints. Wear pastel rather than white shirts or blouses; white glares on the screen and takes light away from your face.

Go easy on the accessories. Don't wear large or excessive jewelry or carry items in your pocket which can distract viewers.

Be careful with cosmetics. Use make-up sparingly and subtly. Manicure nails carefully. Your hands will be seen in extreme close-up if you are using the graphics camera.

How to Proceed

Remember that the camera is only an extension of the room you are in; it represents students or colleagues that need to see and hear you. Interact with it as you would with those physically present.

- **First outline your ground rules.** Participants need to know what to expect from you and from IITS.

- **Relax.** Keep your body "open" to the audience rather than hunched with your arms folded. Avoid shifting or swiveling. Abrupt or jerky movement is exaggerated by the camera. If you tend to pace the floor, consider remaining seated during your presentation.

- **Set the tone.** Strive to keep your approach easy and interested—enthusiasm is contagious.

- **Speak clearly.** Careful enunciation and deliberate delivery make it easier for your audience to hear and to understand.

- **Introduce key people at each site.** Use names as often as possible, particularly of those at remote sites. You underscore their presence by doing so.

- **Address the camera when speaking to a distant site.** Avoid dropping your head to listen; it may appear that you are not paying attention.

Teaching Tips

- Tell the remote sites when you are sending visuals over the system during your presentation and ask if they were received, since it is not possible to tell exactly what image each site is seeing at any given time. Ask participants to question you if what they see on camera seems in any way inconsistent. Interaction is the key to success with IITS.

- Take time between points of your presentation for the audience to digest what has been said. Listen and give adequate response time to those at your location or at remote sites. Do this deliberately, especially at first, until you and your audience build confidence in the technology and in each other.

- Call the Room Coordinator by name to give directions during your presentation. This will avoid confusion.

- Professors and Room Coordinators should maintain a **complete** list of participants in each class containing **at least** two phone numbers per person. Individuals can then be notified in the event a class must be cancelled.

If technical problems occur, a pioneering spirit and sense of adventure will help to minimize them. Support staff will be with you at each site at all times; it is their job to correct any difficulties.

Interactive Opportunities

You should now have a basic idea of how IITS operates as well as some suggestions for preparing visual aids and conducting your meeting on camera. In closing, here is one last idea for you to consider: there is no single right way to use IITS, only the way that is best for your particular needs. Your enthusiasm and willingness to learn IITS with your group will help you adapt to the technology quickly and easily. Once you are comfortable using the system, IITS may seem to disappear.

If you have questions about the equipment, contact the IITS Room Coordinator on your campus. For information on ways to adapt your curriculum to IITS, contact the IITS instructional assistant at your university. Best wishes on your new adventure.